

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00
EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /073 W
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R 011546Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7958
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MADRID

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USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, FR
SUBJECT: UNIONS AND UNEMPLOYMENT

REF: PARIS 25148

1. SUMMARY: AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE GOVERN-
MENT'S SELECTED ECONOMIC STIMULAE, THE UNIONS ARE
DEVELOPING THEIR STRATEGIES. THERE IS NO QUESTION
BUT THAT UNEMPLOYMENT IS GOING TO BE THE BIG ISSUE;
AND, PREDICTABLY, THE FACTS OF THE SITUATION ARE
SINKING INTO A SEA OF RHETORIC AND OBFUSCATION.
END SUMMARY.

2. BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW ECONOMIC MEASURES
HAD EVEN BEEN MADE PUBLIC (SEE SEPTTEL), THE COMMUNIST-
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CONTROLLED CGT AND ITS SOCIALIST-ORIENTED ALLY
THE CFDT HAD ALREADY MET AND AGREED THAT THE
MAJORITY'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS REMAIN
UNACCEPTABLE; AND THAT THEY WOULD CONTINUE, IN THE
MONTHS AHEAD, THEIR STRUGGLE TO FORCE THE GOVERNMENT
INTO SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS ON COMBATTING UNEMPLOYMENT
AND INCREASING REAL INCOME. MAKING REFERENCE TO THE

NEED FOR A FOLLOW UP TO THE NATIONAL -- NEWLY RE-CHRISTENED "UNITED" -- STRIKE OF MAY 24 AND THE ALLEGED MILITANT FEELINGS OF THE WORKERS, THE CGT AND CFDT ANNOUNCED THAT THEY INTENDED TO INCREASE THEIR PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT, ESPECIALLY IN THE NATIONALIZED AND PUBLIC SECTORS. WITH THE RELEASE OF THE DETAILS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S MEASURES, THE TWO UNIONS MERELY INTENSIFIED THEIR ASSAULT ON ALL THE GOF'S PROGRAMS, AND IN PARTICULAR ON THE ALLEGED ABSENCE OF ANY RESULTS FROM THE "PACT FOR EMPLOYMENT" (SEE A-246 OF JUNE 27) AND ON THE LIMITATIONS ON WAGE INCREASES.

3. FOR THEIR PART, THE REFORMIST UNIONS (FO, CFTC, AND CGC) HAVE EXPRESSED TEPID SATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S MEASURES BUT HAVE STRESSED THE NEED TO DO MORE. HANGING, LIKE A BLACK CLOUD OVER THE WHOLE SCENE, IS THE GOVERNMENT'S PERCEIVED UNWILLINGNESS TO BUDGE IN THE PUBLIC AND NATIONALIZED SECTOR WAGE NEGOTIATIONS; AND THE INTERNAL PRESSURES THIS IS GENERATING WITHIN THE UNIONS.

4. MEANWHILE, THE PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM IS GROWING IN EXTENT, IF NOT IN DEPTH. DURING HIS RECENT TOUR AROUND THE COUNTRY, THE PRIME MINISTER MADE REFERENCE TO DEFECTS IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS AND TO THE FACT THAT NOT ALL THE REPORTED JOBLESS ARE REALLY UNEMPLOYED. PREDICTABLY, THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOW ANNOUNCED A PLANNED EXPANSION OF THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (ANPE), A CRACKDOWN ON THOSE UNEMPLOYED WHO REFUSE JOBS OFFERED THEM, A PROGRAM TO INVESTIGATE THE CAUSES FOR THE CONTINUING UNEMPLOYMENT OF ALL PERSONS ON THE ANPE'S ROLLS FOR MORE THAN THREE MONTHS, AND CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES AIMED AT FACILITATING ACCESS TO JOB OFFERS.

5. HIDDEN IN THIS RATHER PROSAIC LIST OF MEASURES TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IS A POTENTIAL POLITICAL SWORD. AS HAS BEEN REPORTED IN THE PAST, THERE SEEMS NO QUESTION BUT THAT THE ANPE IS RIDDLED WITH ACTIVE OPPONENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT WHO HAVE PADDED STATISTICS AND SABOTAGED PLACEMENTS. ALL THIS MAY NOW COME OUT AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE PLANNED INVESTIGATIONS. SOME OF THE POSSIBLE RAMIFICATIONS ARE SUGGESTED BY A RECENT "LE MONDE" ARTICLE. DURING A SUPERFICIALLY OBJECTIVE REPORT ON THE WOES OF THE EMPLOYMENT SER-

VICE, IT WAS NOTED INTER ALIA THAT NUMBERS OF
EMPLOYED PEOPLE ARE CARRIED ON THE UNEMPLOYMENT
STATISTICS BECAUSE THE MUNICIPALITIES IN WHICH THEY

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LIVE HAVE NOT NOTIFIED THE AGENCY THAT THEY HAVE
FOUND JOBS. APPARENTLY FOR ITS OWN GOOD REASONS,
"LE MONDE" CHOSE NOT TO ASK THE OBVIOUS QUESTION
OF WHETHER OR NOT THERE MIGHT BE SOME CONNECTION
BETWEEN THE POLITICAL COLORATION OF THOSE MUNICIPALI-
TIES AND THEIR INDIFFERENCE TO THEIR REPORTING
RESPONSIBILITIES. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE
GOVERNMENT'S INVESTIGATIONS WILL BE THAT INCURIOUS.

6. IN SURVEYING THE SCENE, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO AVOID
BEING STRUCK BY THE SUPERFICIAL AND OBVIOUSLY PARTISAN
QUALITY OF THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE VARIOUS GROUPS
AND THE MEDIA IN THIS MATTER. LEAVING ASIDE THE
QUESTION OF WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT,
WHICH IS CERTAIN TO PRODUCE GENUINE DISAGREEMENT,
THERE IS NO SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF EVEN HOW TO DEFINE

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AND MEASURE ITS TRUE EXTENT, OR HOW TO MAKE THE
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE REALLY MORE EFFECTIVE. RATHER,
WHAT IS TAKING PLACE IS A SIMPLE POLITICAL FREE-FOR-
ALL, WITH THE ELECTIONS IN MIND. IN THIS CONNECTION,
AND DESPITE THE ATTEMPTS, NOTABLY BY THE CGT AND
CFDT, TO PORTRAY THE PUBLIC'S MOOD AS UGLY, THE
REAL SITUATION SEEMS QUITE DIFFERENT. THE BEST
EVIDENCE OF THAT IS THAT THE CGT AND CFDT ARE ONCE
AGAIN CAREFULLY CONFINING THEIR PLANNED CALLS FOR
"ACTION" TO THE WORKERS IN THE JOB-SECURE PUBLIC
AND NATIONALIZED SECTORS AND NOT THOSE OUT IN THE
HARD REAL WORLD OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.
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